THE

SPIRIT

OF

PRAYER.

This Tract is not to be Sold, but given away.

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THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

CHAP I.

Treating of ſome matters preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer.

THE greateſt part of mankind, nay, of Chriſtians, may be ſaid to be aſleep; and that particular way of life, which takes up each man's mind, thoughts, and actions, may well be called his particular dream. This degree of vanity is equally viſible in every form and order of life. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are all in the ſame ſtate of ſlumber; only paſſing away a ſhort life in a different kind of dream. But why ſo? It is becauſe man is born into this world, not for the ſake of living here, not for any thing this world can give him, but only to have time and place to become either an eternal partaker of a divine life with God, or to have a helliſh eternity amongſt fallen angels; And therefore, every man who has not his eyes, his heart, and his hands, continually governed by this two-fold eternity, may be juſtly ſaid to be faſt aſleep. And a life devoted to the intereſts and enjoyments of this world, ſpent and waſted in the ſlavery of earthly deſires, may be truly called a dream, as having all the ſhortneſs, vanity, and deluſion of a dream; only with this great difference, that when a dream is over, nothing is loſt but fictions and fancies; but when the dream of life is ended *only* by death, all that eternity is loſt, for which we were brought into being. Now there is no miſery in this world, nothing that makes either the life or death of man to be full of calamity, but this blindneſs and inſenſibility of his ſtate, into which he ſo willingly, nay, obſtinately plunges himſelf.

ſelf. Every thing that has the nature of evil and diſtreſs in it, takes its riſe from hence. Do but ſuppoſe a man to know himſelf; that he comes into this world on no other errand, but to riſe out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity; do but ſuppoſe him to govern his inward thoughts and outward actions by this view of himſelf, and then to him every day has loſt all its evil; proſperity and adverſity have no difference, becauſe he receives and uſes them both in the ſame ſpirit; life and death are equally welcome, becauſe equally parts of his way to eternity. For poor and miſerable as this life is, we have all of us free acceſs to all that is great, and good, and happy; and carry within ourſelves a *key* to all the treaſures that heaven has to beſtow upon us.—We ſtarve in the midſt of plenty, groan under infirmities with the remedy in our own hand; live and die, without knowing and feeling any thing of the *one only good*, whilſt we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality, as we know and feel the power of this world over us: For heaven is as near to our ſouls, as this world is to our bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our converſation in it. God, the only *good* of all intelligent natures, is not an abſent or diſtant God, but is more preſent *in* and *to* our ſouls, than our own bodies; and we are ſtrangers to heaven, and without God in the world, for this only reaſon, becauſe we are void of that ſpirit of prayer, which alone can unite us with the *one* Good, and open heaven and the kingdom of God within us. A root ſet in the fineſt ſoil, in the beſt climate, and bleſſed with all that ſun and air and rain can do for it, is not in ſo ſure a way to perfection, as a man whoſe ſpirit aſpires after all that, which God is ready and infinitely deſirous to give him. For the *ſun* meets not the ſpringing bud that ſtretches towards him, with half that certainty, as God, the ſource of all good, communicates himſelf to the ſoul that longs to partake of him.

We are all of us the offſpring of God, more nearly related to him, than we are to one another; for *in him we live, and move, and have our being.* The firſt

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man that was brought forth from God, had the ſpirit of *Father*, *Son*, *and Holy Ghoſt* breathed into him, and ſo he became a living ſoul. Thus was our firſt father born of God, and ſtood in paradiſe in the image and likeneſs of God. He was the image and likeneſs of God, not with regard to his outward ſhape, for no ſhape has any likeneſs to God; but becauſe the Holy Trinity had breathed their own nature and ſpirit into him. And as the Deity, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, are always in heaven, and make heaven to be every where; ſo this ſpirit, breathed by them into man, brought heaven into man along with it; and ſo man was in heaven, as well as on earth, that is, in paradiſe, which ſignifies an heavenly ſtate.

Adam had all that divine nature which angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a lord and ruler of a new world; ſo it was neceſſary that he ſhould alſo have the material nature of this new created world in himſelf. His body was the *medium or means* through which he was to have commerce with this world, become viſible to its creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus ſtood our firſt Father; an angel as to his ſpirit; yet dwelling in a body taken from this new-created world; which however was as inferior to him, as ſubject to him, as the earth and all its creatures were.

CHAP. II.

Diſcovering the true way of turning to God, *and of finding the kingdom of heaven, the riches of eternity in our ſouls.*

ALL our ſalvation conſiſts in the *manifeſtation of the nature, life, and ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt in us.* Enter with all thy heart into this truth, let thy eye be always upon it, do every thing in view of it, try every thing by the truth of it, love nothing but for the ſake of it. Wherever thou goeſt, whatever thou doſt at

home, or abroad, in the field or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of his tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing, but that which exercises and increases the spirit and life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee changed into the spirit and temper of the holy Jesus. Let this be thy christianity, thy church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do every thing that thou wanteſt to have done in thee; it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature, it will bring all that is Good into thee, it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections, thy *mouth* will have a *watch* set upon it, thy ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy *eyes* be open, but to see, and find occasions of doing good. In a word, when this faith has got both thy head and thy *heart*, it will then be with thee, as it was with the *merchant* who found a *pearl of great price*, it will make thee glad to *sell all that thou hast, and buy it*. For all that had seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the *merchant of this world had got together*, whether of riches, power, honour, learning, or reputation, loses all its value, is counted but as *dung*, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious pearl, the new birth in Christ Jesus is discovered and found by him. This therefore may serve as a touch-stone, whereby every one may try the truth of his state; if the old man is still a *merchant* within thee, trading in worldly honour, power, or learning, if the wisdom of this world is not foolishness to thee, if earthly interests and sensual pleasures are still the desire of thy heart, and only covered under a form of Godliness, a cloke

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of creeds, obſervances and inſtitutions of religion, thou mayeſt be aſſured, that the pearl of great price is not yet found by thee. For where Chriſt is in the ſoul, there all carnal wiſdom, arts of advancement, with every pride and glory of this life, are ſo many *heathen idols* willingly renounced, and the man is not only content, but rejoices to ſay, that *his kingdom is not of this world.*

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, How ſhall this great work, the knowledge of Chriſt be effected in me? It might rather be ſaid, ſince Chriſt has an infinite power, and alſo an infinite deſire to ſave mankind, how can any one miſs of this ſalvation, but through his *own unwillingneſs* to be ſaved by him? Conſider how was it, that the lame and blind, the lunatic and leper, the publican and ſinner, found Chriſt to be their Saviour, and to do all that for them, which they wanted to be done to them? It was becauſe they had a *real deſire* of having *that* which they aſked for, and therefore in true *faith* and *prayer* applied to Chriſt, that his ſpirit and power might enter into them, and heal that which they wanted and deſired to have healed in them. Every one of theſe ſaid in *faith and deſire, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me whole.* And the anſwer was always this, *According to thy faith, ſo be it done unto thee.* This is Chriſt's anſwer now, and thus it is done to every one of us at this day, as *our faith is, ſo is it done unto us.* And here lies the whole reaſon of our falling ſhort of the ſalvation of Chriſt, it is becauſe we have no will to it.

But you will ſay, Do not all Chriſtians deſire to have Chriſt to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the deceit; all would have Chriſt to be their Saviour in the *next world*, and to help them into heaven when they die. But this is not *willing* Chriſt to be thy Saviour; for his ſalvation, if it is had, muſt be had in this world; if he ſaves thee, it muſt be done in this life, by changing and altering *all that is within thee*, by helping thee to a new heart, as he helped the blind to ſee, the lame to walk, and the dumb to ſpeak. For to have ſalvation from Chriſt, is to be made like unto him; it is to have his humility and meekneſs

meekneſs, his mortification and ſelf-denial, his renunciation of the ſpirit, wiſdom and honours of this world, his love of God, his deſire of doing God's will, and ſeeking only his honour. To have theſe tempers formed in thy heart, is to have ſalvation from Chriſt; but if thou willeſt not to have theſe tempers, if thy faith does not ſeek and cry to Chriſt for them in the ſame reality as the lame aſked to walk, and the blind to ſee, then thou art *unwilling* to have Chriſt to be thy Saviour.

Again, conſider, how was it, that the deep-read *Scribe*, the learned *Rabbi*, the religious *Phariſee*, not only did not receive, but *crucified* their Saviour? It was becauſe they deſired no ſuch Saviour as he was, no ſuch *inward ſalvation* as he offered. They deſired no change of their own nature, no deſtruction of their natural tempers, no deliverance from the love of themſelves, and the enjoyments of their paſſions; they liked the gratifications of their old man, their *long robes*, their *broad phylacteries*, and *greetings* in the markets. They wanted not to have their *pride* and *ſelf-love* dethroned, their covetouſneſs and ſenſuality ſubdued. Their only deſire was the ſucceſs of *Judaiſm*, to have an *outward* Saviour, a *temporal* prince, that ſhould eſtabliſh their *law* and ceremonies over all the earth. And therefore they crucified their Redeemer, and would have none of his ſalvation becauſe it conſiſted in a change of their nature, a kingdom of heaven to be opened *within* them by the Spirit of God.

Awake thou that ſleepeſt, thou that art called a Chriſtian, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light. Begin to ſearch and dig for this *pearl of eternity*; it cannot coſt thee too much, nor canſt thou buy it too dear, for it is *all*; and when thou haſt found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou haſt ſold or given away for it, is as mere a nothing, as a bubble upon the water.

But if thou turneſt from this heavenly pearl, or trampleſt it under thy feet, for the ſake of being rich, or great, either in church or ſtate; if death finds thee in this ſucceſs, thou canſt not then ſay, that though the pearl is loſt, yet ſomething has been gained inſtead of it. For in that parting moment, the things, and

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the ſounds of this world will be exactly alike; to have had an eſtate, or only to have heard of it, to have lived at *Lambeth* twenty years, or only to have twenty times paſſed by the palace, will be the ſame good, or the ſame nothing to thee.

I will now ſhew a little more diſtinctly, what this *pearl of eternity is*. *Firſt*, It is the *light* and *ſpirit* of God, which has hitherto done thee but little good, becauſe the deſire of thy heart has been after the light and ſpirit of this world. Thy reaſon, and ſenſes, and paſſions, have turned all their attention to the poor concerns of this life, and therefore thou art a ſtranger to this principle of heaven, theſe riches of eternity. For as God is not, cannot be truly found by any worſhippers, but thoſe who worſhip him in *ſpirit* and in *truth*, ſo this light and ſpirit is not, cannot be found, or enjoyed, but by thoſe, whoſe ſpirit is turned to it.

When man firſt came into being, and ſtood before God as his own Image and likeneſs, this light and ſpirit of God were as natural to him, as the *light and air* of this world is natural to other creatures. But when man, not content with the food of eternity, did eat of the earthly tree, this light and ſpirit of heaven were no more natural to him; but inſtead thereof, he was left to the light and ſpirit of this world. And this is that death which God told *Adam* he ſhould ſurely die, in the day that he eat of the forbidden tree.

But the goodneſs of God would not leave man in this condition; a redemption from it was immediately granted, and a bruiſer of the ſerpent to bring the light and ſpirit of heaven once more into the human nature. This light and ſpirit of God is called *grace*, *free grace*, or the *ſupernatural* gift, or power of God in the Soul, becauſe it is ſomething, that the natural powers of the ſoul can no more obtain. Hence it is that every ſtirring of the ſoul, every tendency of the heart towards God and goodneſs, is juſtly aſcribed to the holy ſpirit, or the grace of God. It is becauſe this firſt ſeed of life, which is ſown into the ſoul, is itſelf the light of God, and therefore every ſtirring or opening of this ſeed of life, every awakening thought

thought or desire that arises from it, must be called the moving or the quickening of the spirit of God. Hence also we have a plain declaration of the certain truth of all those scriptures, which speak of the inspiration of God, the operation of the holy spirit, the power of the divine light, as the necessary agents in the renewal and sanctification of our souls. Hence also it is, that all men are exhorted not to quench, or resist, or grieve the spirit, that is, this *seed of the spirit and light of* God, that is in all men, as the only source of good. Again *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* By the flesh and its lustings, are meant the *mere human nature* or *natural man*, as he is by the fall; by the spirit is meant the bruiser of the serpent, that seed of the light and spirit of God, which lieth as a treasure hid in the soul, in order to bring forth the life that was lost in *Adam*. Now as the flesh hath its life, its lustings, whence all sorts of evils are truly said to be inspired, quickned, and stirred up in us; so the spirit being a living principle within us, has its inspiration, its breathing, its moving, its quickning, from which alone the divine life, or the angel that died in *Adam*, can be born in us.

When this spirit is not resisted, grieved, and quenched, but its inspirations and motions suffered to grow and increase in us, to unite with God, and get power over all the lusts of the Flesh, then the nature, spirit, and tempers of Jesus Christ are opened in our souls. On the other hand, when the flesh, hath resisted and quenched this spirit; then the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, murders, lying, hatred, envy, wrath, pride, foolishness, worldly wisdom, carnal prudence, false religion, hypocritical holiness, and serpentine subtilty, set up their kingdom within us.

Secondly. This pearl of eternity is the wisdom and love of God within thee. In this pearl, all the holy nature, spirit, tempers and inclinations of Christ lie, and divine wisdom and heavenly love will grow up in thee, if thou givest but true attention to God. On the other hand, There is hidden also in the depth of thy nature the root, or possibility of all the hellish

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nature, ſpirit and tempers of the fallen angels. For heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us, and ſpring up in us according as our heart is turned either to the light of God, or the kingdom of darkneſs. But when this life which is in the midſt of theſe two eternities, is at an end, either an angel or a devil will be found to have birth in us.

Thou needeſt not therefore run here, or there, *ſaying, where is Chriſt? Thou needeſt not ſay, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from above? Or who ſhall deſcend into the Deep to bring up Chriſt from the dead?* For behold the word, the wiſdom of God is in thy heart, as a light unto thy feet and lanthorn unto thy paths. It is there as an holy oil, to ſoften and overcome the wrathful properties of thy nature, and change them into the humble meekneſs of light and love. It is there as a ſpeaking word of God in thy ſoul; and, as ſoon as thou art ready to hear, will ſpeak wiſdom and love in thy inward parts, and bring forth Chriſt, with all his holy nature, ſpirit and tempers. Hence it is, that in the Chriſtian Church there have been in all ages amongſt the moſt illiterate, both men and women, who have attained to a deep underſtanding of the myſteries of the wiſdom and love of God in Chriſt Jeſus. And what wonder? Since it is not art or ſcience, or ſkill in grammar or logic, but the opening of the divine life in the ſoul, that can give true underſtanding of the things of God. This life of God in the ſoul, which for its ſmalneſs at firſt, is by our Lord compared to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, may be, and too generally is ſuppreſſed, either by worldly cares or pleaſures, by vain learning, ſenſuality, or ambition. And all this while, whatever church or profeſſion a man is of, he is a mere natural man, unregenerate, unenlightened by the ſpirit of God. And therefore his religion is no more from heaven, than his fine breeding; his cares have no more goodneſs in them, than his pleaſures; his love is worth no more than his hatred; his zeal for this, or againſt that form of religion, has only the nature of any other worldly contention in it. And thus it is, and muſt be with every natural man; whatever

whatever appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleaſes, know himſelf to be the ſlave and machine of his own corrupt tempers and inclinations; to be enlightened, inſpired, quickened and animated by ſelf-love, ſelf-eſteem, and ſelf-ſeeking, which is the only life and ſpirit of the mere natural man whether he be Heathen, Jew, or Chriſtian.

On the other hand, wherever this ſeed is ſuffered to take root in the ſoul, there the man is juſtly ſaid to be inſpired, enlightened and moved by the ſpirit of God, and all that is in him hath the nature, ſpirit, and tempers of heaven in it. As this life grows up in any man, ſo there grows up a true knowledge of the whole myſtery of Godlineſs. All that the goſpel teaches of ſin and grace, of the new and old man, of the light and ſpirit of God, are things not got by hearſay, but inwardly known, felt and experienced. He has then an unction from above which teacheth him all things, a ſpirit that *knoweth what it ought to pray for*, a ſpirit that *prays without ceaſing*, that is riſen with Chriſt from the dead, and has all its converſation in heaven, a ſpirit that hath *groans and ſighs that cannot be uttered*, that travaileth and groaneth with the whole creation, to be delivered from vanity, and have its glorious liberty in that God, from whom it came forth.

Again, *Thirdly*, This *Pearl* of eternity is the *church*, or *temple* of God *within thee*, where alone, thou canſt worſhip God in *ſpirit and in truth*. In *ſpirit*, becauſe thy ſpirit is that alone which can unite to God, and receive the workings of his ſpirit upon thee: In truth, becauſe this adoration in ſpirit is that truth and reality, of which all outward forms and rites, though inſtituted by God, are only the figure for a time; but this worſhip is eternal. Accuſtom thyſelf to the holy ſervice of this inward temple. In the midſt of it is the fountain of living water, of which thou mayeſt drink, and live for ever. There the birth, the life, the ſufferings, the death, the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, are not merely remembered, but inwardly found and enjoyed as the real ſtates of thy ſoul, which has followed Chriſt in the regeneration. When once

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thou art well grounded in this inward worſhip; when God has all that he ſhould have of thy heart; when renouncing thy natural will, judgment, tempers and inclinations, thou art wholly given up to the obedience of the light and ſpirit of God, to will only in his will. to love only in his love, to be wiſe only in his wiſdom, then it is that every thing thou doſt is as a ſong of praiſe, and the common buſineſs of thy life is a conforming to God's will on earth, as angels do in heaven.

But this cannot be, till in obedience to his call, *thou denieſt thyſelf, takeſt up thy daily croſs, and followeſt him.* This is peremptory, it admits of no reſerve or evaſion; it is the one way to Chriſt and eternal life. Be where thou wilt, either here, or at *Rome*, or *Geneva*, if thou liveſt to thine own will, to the pleaſures of thy natural luſt and appetites, ſenſes and paſſions, and in conformity to the cuſtoms and ſpirit of this world, thou art dead whilſt thou liveſt. Chriſt can profit thee nothing, thou art a ſtranger to all that is holy and heavenly, and incapable of finding the peace and joy of God. And thus thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and empty, and liveſt a miſerable life in the vanity of time; whilſt all the riches of eternity, the light and ſpirit, the peace and joy of God are waiting for thee. And thus it will always be with thee, there is no remedy; go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is ſhut up, there is no open door of ſalvation, no deliverance from thy corrupt nature, no overcoming of the world, no ſolid joy above, till dying to thyſelf and the world, thou turneſt to the light, and ſpirit, and power of God.

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, How ſhall I have theſe riches of eternity, this ſpirit, and wiſdom, and peace of God within me? Thy *firſt thought* of repentance, or deſire of turning to God, is thy *firſt diſcovery* of this light and ſpirit of God. It is the voice and language of God, though thou knoweſt it not. It is the bruiſer of the ſerpent's head, who is beginning to preach *within* thee, what he firſt preached in public, ſaying, *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

When therefore but the ſmalleſt deſire calleth thee towards God, give it time and leave to ſpeak; and take care thou refuſe not him that ſpeaketh. For it is not an angel from heaven that ſpeaketh to thee, but it is the eternal *Word* of God; that Word which at firſt created thee, is thus beginning to call thee unto righteouſneſs, that a new man may be formed in thee in the image and likeneſs of God. But above all things beware of taking this deſire of repentance to be the effect of thy own natural ſenſe and reaſon: for in ſo doing thou ſhutteſt the door againſt God, turneſt away from him, and thy repentance (if thou haſt any) will be only a vain unprofitable work of thy own hands, that will do thee no more good than a well that is without water. But if thou takeſt this deſire of turning to God, to be, as in truth it is, the *working*, *redeeming* power of the holy Jeſus, if thou doſt reverence and adhere to it as ſuch, this *faith will make thee whole*; and by thus believing in Chriſt, though thou were dead, yet ſhalt thou live.

Now all dependeth upon thy right ſubmiſſion and obedience to this ſpeaking of God in thy ſoul. Therefore liſten not to the ſuggeſtions of thy own reaſon, run not on in thy own will, but be humbly attentive to this new-riſen light within thee; open thy heart, thy eyes, and ears to all its impreſſions. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn thee, as it pleaſeth; turn not away from it, hear all it ſaith, ſeek for no relief out of it, conſult not with fleſh and blood, but with a heart full of reſignation to God, pray only this prayer, that God's kingdom may come, and his will be done in thy ſoul. Stand faithfully in this ſtate of preparation, thus given up to the ſpirit of God, and then the work of thy repentance will be wrought, and thou wilt ſoon find that he that is in thee, is much greater than all that are againſt thee.

But that thou mayeſt be firmly aſſured that this reſignation to, and dependence upon the working of God's Spirit is right and ſound, I ſhall lay before thee two fundamental Truths.

Firſt.

First That through the whole nature of things, nothing can do, or be a real good to thy ſoul, but the *operation of God* upon it. *Secondly*, That all the diſpenſations of God from the fall of *Adam* to the preaching of the goſpel, were only for this one end, to prepare and diſpoſe the ſoul for the operation of the ſpirit of God upon it. Theſe two great truths deeply apprehended, put the ſoul in its right ſtate, in a continual dependence upon God, and a readineſs to receive all good from him. They will keep thee ſafe from all errors and falſe zeal in forms of religion, from a ſectarian ſpirit, from bigotry and ſuperſtition; they will teach thee the true difference between the means and end of religion, and the regard thou ſheweſt to the ſhell, will be only ſo far as the kernel is to be found in it.

Man, by his fall, had broke off from his true center, his proper place in God, and therefore the life and operation of God was no more in him. He was fallen from a life in God into an animal life of ſelf-love, ſelf-eſteem, and ſelf-ſeeking in the poor periſhing enjoyments of this world. This was the *natural ſtate* of man by the fall. He was an apoſtate from God, and his natural life was all idolatry, where *ſelf* was the great idol that was worſhipped inſtead of God. All ſin is nothing elſe but the various operations of ſelf-love, ſelf-eſteem, and ſelf-ſeeking, which ſeparate the ſoul from God, and end in eternal death.

On the other hand, all *grace*, *redemption*, *ſalvation*, *ſanctification*, *ſpiritual life*, is nothing elſe but ſo much of the life and operation of God found again in the ſoul. It is man come back again into his center or place in God, from whence he had broke off. The beginning of the life of God in the ſoul, was then firſt made, when the mercy of God promiſed a ſeed, which ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. Then was given a degree of the divine life, which if rightly cultivated, would make of every fallen man, a new-born ſon of God.

All the ſacrifices and inſtitutions of the ancient Patriarchs, the law of *Moſes*, with all its types and rites, and ceremonies, had this only end; they were the

methods of divine wiſdom for a time, to keep the hearts of men from the wanderings of idolatry, in a ſtate of holy expectation; they were to make way for the farther operation of God upon the ſoul; or, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, to be as a ſchoolmaſter unto Chriſt. That is, till the birth, the death, the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, ſhould conquer death and hell, open a new diſpenſation of God, and baptize mankind afreſh with the Holy Ghoſt and fire of heaven. Then, that is, on the day of *Pentecoſt*, a *new diſpenſation* of God came forth; which on God's part, was the operation of the Holy Spirit in gifts and graces upon the whole church. And on man's part, it was the adoration of God in *ſpirit and in truth*. Thus all that was done by God, from the promiſe given to *Adam*, to Chriſt's ſitting down on the right hand of God, was for this end, to remove all that ſtood between God and man, and to make way for the immediate and continual operation of God upon the ſoul: And that man baptized with the holy ſpirit, and born again, ſhould wholly give up his ſoul to the operation of God's ſpirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worſhip, to preach, to exhort, to uſe all the faculties of his mind, and all the outward things of this world, as enlightened, inſpired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghoſt: Who, by this laſt diſpenſation of God, was given to be a comforter, a teacher, and guide to the church, to abide with it for ever.

This is Chriſtianity, a ſpiritual Society, not becauſe it has no worldly concerns, but becauſe all its members, as ſuch, are born of the Spirit, animated and governed by the Spirit of God. It is conſtantly called by our Lord the kingdom of God, or heaven, becauſe all its miniſtry and ſervice, all that is done in it, is done in obedience and ſubjection to *that ſpirit*, by which angels live and are governed in heaven. Hence our bleſſed Lord taught his diſciples to pray, that this kingdom might come, that ſo God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven; which could not be, but by that ſame ſpirit by which it is done in heaven. The ſhort is this: The kingdom of ſelf is the great apoſtacy from the life of God in

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the ſoul, and every one wherever he be, that liveth unto himſelf, is ſtill under the fall and apoſtacy from God. The kingdom of Chriſt, is the ſpirit and power of God, dwelling and manifeſting itſelf in the inward man; and no one is a member of this kingdom, but ſo far as the Spirit reigns in him. Theſe two kingdoms take in all mankind, he that is not of one, is certainly in the other; dying to one is living to the other.

Hence we may gather the following truths: *Firſt*, That when the call of God to repentance firſt ariſeth in thy ſoul, thou art wholly to diſregard the workings of thy own will. It is becauſe this is a falſe counſellor, the ſworn ſervant, the bribed ſlave of thy fallen nature; and therefore if the operation of God is to have its effect in thee, muſt be ſilenced, till it has learned obedience and ſubjection to the Spirit of God. Now this is not requiring thee to become a fool, or to give up thy ſenſe and reaſon; but is the ſhorteſt way to have thy ſenſe and reaſon delivered from folly, and guided by that light, which is wiſdom itſelf.

A child that denies his own will to be guided by the will of a truly wiſe and underſtanding tutor, cannot be ſaid to make himſelf a fool, and give up the benefit of his rational nature, but to take the ſhorteſt way to have his own will made truly a bleſſing to him.

Secondly. Hence is to be ſeen the true ground of univerſal mortification and ſelf-denial with regard to all our ſenſes, appetites, tempers, paſſions and judgments. It is becauſe our whole nature, as fallen from the life of God, is in a ſtate of contrariety to the order and end of our creation, a continual ſource of diſorderly appetites, corrupt tempers, and falſe judgments. And therefore every motion of it is to be mortified, changed and purified from its natural ſtate, before we can enter into the kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord ſaith, *Except a man hateth his Father and mother, yea and his own life, he cannot be my diſciple*; it is becauſe our beſt tempers are yet full of the imperfections of our fallen nature. Not as if father and mother were to be hated; but *that love*, which an unregenerate perſon hath towards them, is to be *hated*;

as being a blind ſelf-love, full of all the *weakneſs* and *partiality*, with which fallen man loves, honours, and cleaves to himſelf. This love, born from corrupt fleſh and blood, is to be *hated* and *parted* with, that we may love them with ſuch a love, and on ſuch a motive, as Chriſt hath loved us. And then the *diſciple* of Chriſt far exceeds all others in the love of parents. Again, our own life is to be hated; the reaſon is plain, becauſe there is nothing lovely in it. It is a *legion* of evil, an *apoſtacy* from the *life* and *power* of God in the ſoul; a life that is *death* to heaven, that is pure unmixed *idolatry*, that lives not to God, and therefore *all this own life* is to be abſolutely *hated*, if the nature, ſpirit, tempers and inclinations of Chriſt are to be in us.

Thus when our Lord further ſaith, unleſs a man forſake *all that he hath he cannot be my diſciple*. The reaſon is plain; all that the natural man hath, is in the poſſeſſion of ſelf-love, and therefore this poſſeſſion is to be abſolutely forſaken, and parted with. All that he hath, is to be put into other hands, to be given to divine love, or this *natural man* cannot be changed into a diſciple of Chriſt. For ſelf-love in *all that it hath*, is earthly, ſenſual and deviliſh, and therefore muſt have *all* taken away from it; and then to the natural man all is loſt, he hath nothing left, all is laid down at the feet of Jeſus. Then all things are common, as ſoon as ſelf-love has loſt the poſſeſſion of them. And then the diſciple of Chriſt, *though having nothing, yet poſſeſſeth all things*; all that the natural man hath forſaken, is reſtored to the diſciple of Chriſt an hundred-fold. For ſelf-love the greateſt of all thieves, being now caſt out, and all that he had ſtolen and hidden thus taken from him, and put into the hands of divine love, every *mite* becometh a large treaſure, and mammon openeth the door into everlaſting habitations. This was the ſpirit of the firſt draught of a Chriſtian church at *Jeruſalem*, a church made truly after the pattern of heaven, where the love that reigns in heaven reigned in it, where divine love broke down all the ſelfiſh fences, the locks and

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bolts of *me*, *mine*, and laid all things common to the members of this new kingdom of God on earth.

Now, though many years did not paſs after the age of the apoſtles, before *Satan* got footing in the church, and ſet up merchandiſe in the houſe of God; yet this one heart and one ſpirit which then appeared in the *Jeruſalem* church, is that *one heart* and *ſpirit* of divine love, to which all are called that would be true diſciples of Chriſt. And though the practice of it is loſt as to the church in general, yet it ought not to have been loſt; and therefore every Chriſtian ought to make it his great care and prayer to have it reſtored in himſelf. And then though born in the dregs of time, or living in *Babylon*, he will be as truly a member of the firſt church at *Jeruſalem*, as if he had lived in it in the days of the apoſtles. This ſpirit of love, born of that celeſtial fire, with which Chriſt baptizes his true diſciples, is alone that ſpirit, which can enter into heaven, and therefore is that ſpirit which is to be in us, while we are on earth. For no one can enter into heaven, till he is made heavenly, till the ſpirit of heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our Lord hath ſaid of a man's parting with all that he hath, is abſolutely neceſſary from the nature of the thing.

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, if all ſelf-love is to be renounced, then all love of our neigbour is renounced, becauſe the commandment is, only *to love our neighbour as ourſelves*. The anſwer is eaſy. There is but one love in heaven, and yet the angels of God love one another in the ſame manner as they love themſelves. The matter is thus: The one ſupreme *rule* of love, which is a *law* to all intelligent beings, and will be a law to all eternity, is this, *God alone is to be loved for himſelf*, and *all other beings only in him, and for him*. Whatever intelligent creature lives not under this rule, is ſo far fallen from the order of his creation; and is, till he returns to this eternal law of love, an apoſtate from God, and incapable of the kingdom of heaven.

Now if God alone is to be loved for himſelf, then no creature is to be loved for itſelf: and ſo all ſelf-love in every creature is abſolutely condemned.

And

And if all created beings are only to be loved in and for God, then my neighbour is to be loved as I love myſelf, and I am only to love myſelf as I love my neighbour, or any other created being, that is only in and for God. And thus the command of loving our neighbour as ourſelves, ſtands firm, and yet all ſelf-love is plucked up by the roots. But what is loving any creature, only in and for God? It is when we love it merely as it is God's and belongs to him, this is loving it *in* God. And when all that we wiſh, intend, or do to it, is done from a love of God, for the honour of God, and in conformity to the will of God, this is loving it for God. This is the *one love* that is, and muſt be the ſpirit of all creatures, that live united to God. Now this is no ſpeculative refinement, but the ſimple truth, a firſt law of nature, and a neceſſary band of union between God and the creature. The creature has loſt the life of God whenever its love does not thus begin and end in God.

Thirdly. Hence we may learn the true nature and worth of all *ſelf-denial* and *mortification.* As to their nature, conſidered in themſelves, they have nothing of *goodneſs* or *holineſs*, nor are any real parts of our ſanctification, they have no *quickning ſanctifying power* in them; their only worth conſiſts in this, that they break down that which ſtands between God and us, and make way for the *quickning ſanctifying ſpirit* of God to operate: Which operation of God is the *only* thing that can raiſe the divine life in the ſoul, or help it to the ſmalleſt degree of real holineſs. As in our creation, we had only *that degree* of divine life, which the power of God derived into us; ſo in our redemption, or regaining *that* firſt perfection, all muſt be again the operation of God.

Hence alſo we may learn, why many people not only loſe the benefit, but are even the worſe for all their mortifications. It is becauſe they miſtake the whole nature of them. They practiſe them for their *own ſakes*, as things good in themſelves; they think them to be real parts of holineſs, and ſo reſt in them, and grow full of ſelf-eſteem and ſelf-admiration for their progreſs in them. This makes them ſelf-ſufficient,

cient, moroſe, ſevere judges of all thoſe that fall ſhort of their mortifications.

And thus their ſelf-denials do only *that* for them, which indulgences do for other people, they withſtand and hinder the operation of God upon their ſouls.

There is no avoiding this fatal error, but by deeply entering into this great truth, that all our own working can do no good to us, but as it leads us in the beſt manner to the light and ſpirit of God, which alone brings life and ſalvation into the ſoul. *Stretch forth thy hand*, ſaid our Lord to the man, *that had a withered hand*; he did ſo, and *it was immediately made whole as the other*.

Now had this man any ground for pride for the ſhare he had in the reſtoring of his hand? Yet juſt ſuch is our ſhare in the raiſing up of the ſpiritual life within us. All that we can do, is only like this man's ſtretching out his hand; the reſt is the work of Chriſt, the only giver of life to the withered hand, or the dead ſoul. When the Virgin *Mary* conceived the holy Jeſus, all that ſhe did towards it herſelf, was only this ſingle act of faith and reſignation; *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.* This is all that we can do towards the conception of the new man in ourſelves. Now this truth is eaſily conſented to, and a man thinks he believes it, becauſe he does not deny it. But this is not enough: it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical aſſurance, in ſuch a manner as a man knows that he did not create the ſtars, or cauſe life to riſe up in himſelf. And then it is a belief that makes room for the operation of God upon it. His light then enters with full power into the ſoul, and his holy Spirit directs all that is done in it, and ſo man lives again in God as a new creature. For this truth thus firmly believed, will have theſe two effects: *Firſt*, it will keep the ſoul continually turned towards God, in faith, prayer, deſire, confidence, and reſignation, for all that it wants to have done in it and to it; which will be a continual ſource of all divine graces. The ſoul thus turned to God, muſt be always receiving from him

him. It ſtands at the true door of all divine communications, and the light of God as freely enters into it as the light of the ſun enters into the air. *Secondly*, It will fix and ground the ſoul in a true and laſting ſelf-denial. For by thus knowing our own nothingneſs and inability, that we have no other capacity for good, but that of receiving it from God alone; no room is left for ſpiritual pride; we are ſaved from a phariſaical holineſs, from wrong opinions of our own works and good deeds, and from a multitude of errors, the moſt dangerous to our ſouls, all which ariſe from the ſomething that we take ourſelves to be either in nature or grace. But when we once apprehend but in ſome good degree, the all of God, and the nothingneſs of ourſelves, we have got a truth whoſe uſefulneſs and benefit no words can expreſs. It brings a kind of infallibility into the ſoul, in which it dwells; all that is vain and falſe, and deceitful, is forced to vaniſh before it. When our religion is founded on this, it has the firmneſs of a rock, and its height reaches unto heaven. The world, the fleſh and the devil can do no hurt to it; all enemies are known, and all diſarmed by this great truth dwelling in our ſouls. It is the knowledge of the all of God, that makes cherubim and ſeraphim to be flames of divine love. For where this all of God is truly known and felt in any creature, there its whole breath and ſpirit is a fire of love; nothing but a pure diſintereſted love can riſe up in it, or come from it, a a love that begins and ends in God. For this pure love introduces the creature into the all of God, all that is in God is opened in the creature, it is united with God, and hath the life of God manifeſted in it.

There is but one ſalvation for all mankind, and that is the life of God in the ſoul. God has but one deſign towards all mankind, and that is to generate his own life, light, and ſpirit in them, that all may be as ſo many images, temples, and habitations of the Holy Trinity.

Now there is but one poſſible way for man to attain this ſalvation, or life of God in the ſoul: and that is, *the deſire of the ſoul turned to God.* Through this deſire

deſire the poor prodigal ſon leaveth his huſks and ſwine, and haſteth to his father; 'tis becauſe of *this deſire* that the father ſeeth the ſon, while yet afar off, that he runs out to meet him, falleth on his neck, and kiſſeth him. No ſooner is this deſire in motion towards God, but the operation of God's ſpirit anſwers to it, cheriſhes and welcomes its firſt beginnings, ſignified by the father's ſeeing, and having compaſſion on his ſon, whilſt yet afar off, that is, in the firſt beginnings of his deſire. Thus does this deſire bring the ſoul to God, and God into the ſoul. Suppoſe this deſire not to be alive, either in a *Jew*, or *Chriſtian*, and then all the ſacrifices, the ſervice, the worſhip either of the Law or the goſpel, are but dead works, that bring no life into the ſoul. Suppoſe this deſire to be awakened, though in ſouls that never heard either of the law or goſpel, and the operation of God enters into them, and Chriſt bleſſes thoſe that never heard of his name.

O my God, juſt and good, how great is thy love and mercy to mankind, that heaven is thus every where open, and Chriſt thus the common Saviour, to all that turn the deſire of their hearts to thee! O ſweet power of the bruiſer of the ſerpent, that ſtirs and works in every man who has a deſire to find his happineſs in God! O holy Jeſus, heavenly *Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, that redeemeth every ſoul that followeth thy light; O holy Trinity, immenſe ocean of love, in which all mankind live, and have their being! None live out of thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of thy mercy, as ſoon as their heart is turned to thee! O plain, and eaſy, and ſimple way of ſalvation, wanting no ſubtleties of art or ſcience, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reaſon, but all done by the ſimple motion of every heart that truly longs after God. For no ſooner is the deſire of the creature in motion towards God, but the deſire of God co-operates with it. And in this united deſire of God and the creature, is the ſalvation of the ſoul brought forth. For the ſoul is ſhut out of God, and impriſoned in its own dark

dark workings of flesh and blood, merely because it desires to live to the vanity of this world. This desire is its darkness, its death, its imprisonment, and separation from God.

When therefore the *first spark* of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone, that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise-men of the East followed the star from heaven that appeared to them.

Christ saith, "I am the Light of the world, he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness." He directs us only to himself. He is the morning-star, and is generated and riseth in us, and shineth in the darkness of our nature. O how great a triumph is there in the soul, when he ariseth in it! then a man knows, as he never knew before, that he is a stranger in a foreign land.

A PRAYER.

O Heavenly Father, infinite, fathomless depth of never-ceasing love, save me from myself, from the disorderly workings of my fallen, corrupted nature, and let mine eyes see, my heart and spirit feel and find thy salvation in Christ Jesus.

O God, who madest me for thyself, to shew forth thy goodness in me, manifest I humbly beseech thee; the life giving power of thy holy nature within me, help me to such a true and living faith in thee, such hunger and thirst after the life of thy holy Jesus in my soul, that all that is within me may be turned from every inward thought or outward work, that is not thee, thy holy Jesus, and heavenly working in my soul. *Amen.*

THE END.